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Operational Excellence

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### Increasing Access to Spiritual Care Services in the Emergency Department: A Patient and Staff Support Model

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Project: Increasing Access to Spiritual Care Services in the Emergency

Department: A Patient and Staff Support Model

Last Updated: 7.12.2019

Executive Sponsor: Joy Moody

Facilitators: Heather Weidemann, Tia Jamir, Ruth Hanselman



Team Members: Per Diem Chaplains, Chaplain Intern Students, Spiritual Care Staff

Problem/Impact Statement:

Despite extensive evidence that interfaith Spiritual Care reduces emotional distress and improves health outcomes, especially in times of suffering and trauma, appropriate use of Spiritual Care services is a challenge for busy Emergency Department (ED) staff. At the beginning of this improvement journey, a lack of awareness and collaboration between the Spiritual Care Department and the ED was resulting in numerous missed opportunities to offer needed support. Per Diem Chaplains who are trained in initiating, deepening, and developing empathically caring relationships were available on call 24/7 to provide interfaith Spiritual Care for both patients and staff. However, ED staffers were often unaware of this resource and the Chaplains were uncertain about the most effective ways to generate increased referrals and consults from the ED. In order for our Per Diem Chaplains to provide timely person-centered care for patients and their loved ones, as well as supportive presence for care team well-being, they needed to be integrated more effectively into the clinical care team in the ED.

Scope:

In scope: MMC Spiritual Care, Emergency Department (ED) Staff; ED patients and their families

Out of scope: Other MMC departments, MaineHealth Hospitals

Goal/Objective:

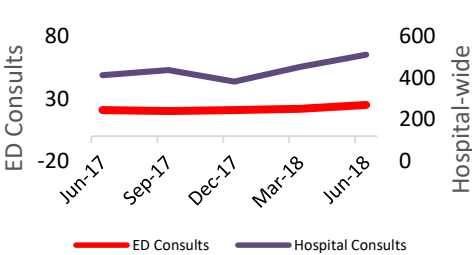
Integrate Spiritual Care and emotional support into the clinical setting for improved care of ED staff and patients by:

- Expanding the number of Spiritual Care hours spent rounding in the ED in order to offer support to ED staff and increase the visibility of the Per Diem Chaplains
- Increasing the percentage of EHR consult orders received by Spiritual Care for ED patients

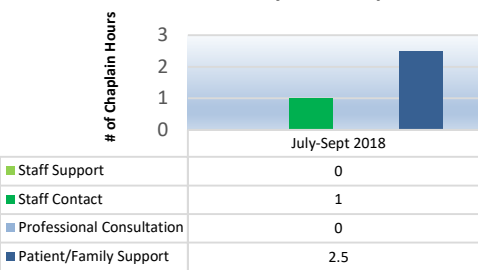
Baseline Metrics/Current State:

Despite increases in Spiritual Care consults across the hospital, only **4.87%** of consults on average were occurring in the ED, with **0** documented hours of staff support

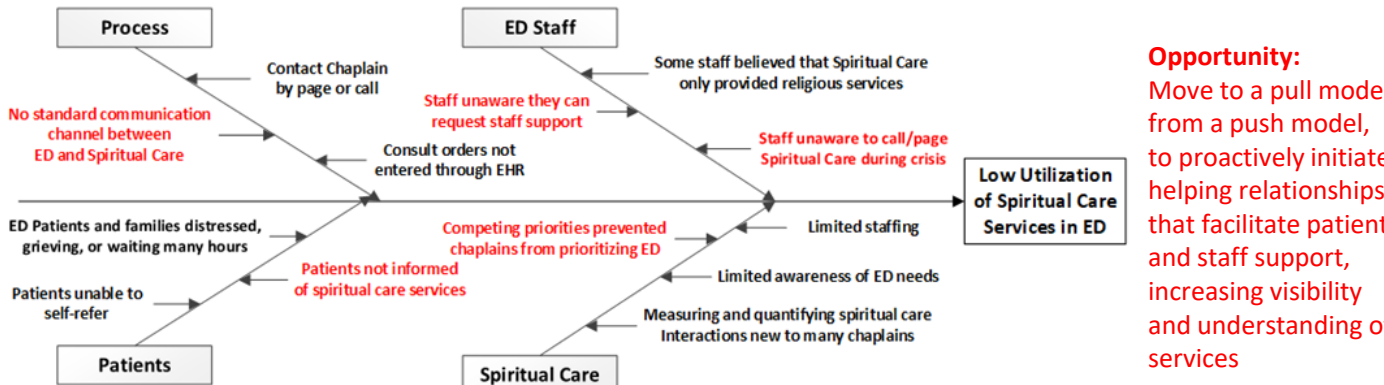
SC Consults in the ED vs. Hospital Wide  
June 2017 – June 2018



Staff/Patient Support in the ED  
Total Time: July 2018- Sept 2018



Root Cause Analysis:



Opportunity: Move to a pull model from a push model, to proactively initiate helping relationships that facilitate patient and staff support, increasing visibility and understanding of services

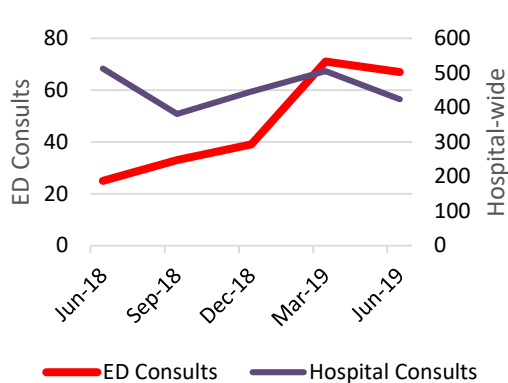
Countermeasures

Action	Owner	Status
Changed department-wide staffing structure to three 8-hour shifts in order to align with nursing schedules and encourage a “pull” (proactive) model of engagement for evening and overnight chaplains	Spiritual Care Manager	Complete (February 2018)
KPI: Attend evening huddles and shift change meetings with ED staff, a minimum of 80% of the time when on call overnight	Per Diem Chaplains	Ongoing (October 2018)
Part-time Chaplain Intern assigned to the ED 3 days a week	Spiritual Care Director/Manager	Complete (January 2019)
KPI: Spiritual Care provided education on services offered to ED staff, including emotional support for staff	Spiritual Care Director/Manager	Complete (February 2019)
Visual Management: Photo board with all Spiritual Care Chaplains developed and distributed to staff	Spiritual Care Admin Specialist	Complete (March 2019)
KPI: Developed tracking system using EHR to identify and locate ED patients and boarders, to proactively identify need	Spiritual Care Director/Manager	Complete (April 2019)

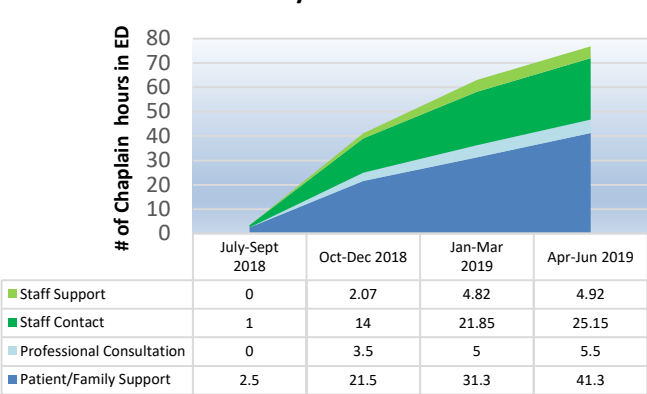
Outcomes

June 2019: **15.8%** of Spiritual Care Consults were in the ED  
  
Project start: **4.87%**

Consults in the ED vs. Hospital Wide  
June 2018 - June 2019



Staff/Patient Support in the ED  
Total Time: July 2018 - June 2019



Staff Feedback: Benefits of Spiritual Care Presence

“Chaplains have responded to codes and gone above and beyond to care for staff and patients in the ED”  
– ED RN

“An employee paged Spiritual Care about a highly sensitive matter. We were able to form a triage for them during a challenging personal time”  
– ED Leader

“A patient was a boarder in the ED and when they asked for prayer and Communion, a nurse joined in. It was a special moment of connection for everyone”  
– ED RN

Next Steps

- Sustain and enhance the emerging collaboration between Spiritual Care and ED staff.
- Integrate a spiritual assessment that is measurable and documented into the overall plan of care for the patient.
- Plan for future department initiatives, e.g. enhancing the provision of specialized spiritual care and family support for Pediatric patients and their caregivers in the ED.
- Continue to expand the awareness and utilization of Spiritual Care services throughout the hospital, especially in helping to interpret cultural issues and faith perspectives that may impact health care decisions.